

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01

FCC-01 /061 W

----- 019699

O 062213Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1836

INFO ALL AMCONSULS CANADA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

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BRUSSELS PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, CA

SUBJECT: BORDER TV ISSUE

REF: OTTAWA 4504, 4247

1. SUMMARY: GOC RESPONSE TO USG REQUEST FOR MORATORIUM ON COMMERCIAL DELETION APPEARS LIKELY TO BE FAVORABLE BUT NOT NECESSARILY UNEQUIVOCAL. DOC OFFICIAL SUGGESTS GOC MAY WISH TO KEEP OPEN OPTIONS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF SELECTIVE DELETION. EXTAFF MINISTER JAMIESON HOPES TO CONVEY GOC RESPONSE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER IN BRUSSELS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT, IF RESPONSE IS LESS THAN CLAR-CUT THREE-YEAR MORATORIUM, SECRETARY TRY TO PIN JAMIESON DOWN AND, AS APPROPRIATE, PROPOSE ANOTHER MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY

2. EXTAFF HAS BEEN EXTREMELY CLOSE-MOUTHED IN RECENT WEEKS ABOUT LIKELY GOC RESPONSE TO OUR OCTOBER REQUEST FOR MORATORIUM ON DELETION OF TV COMMERCIALS EXCEPT TO INDICATE JAMIESON HOPES TO RAISE MATTER WITH SECRETARY IN BRUSSELS THIS WEEK. EMBASSY PRESUMES THIS SIGNALS A FAVORABLE REPLY, AN IMPRESSION REINFORCED BY RECENT REMARKS OF COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER SUAVE TO AMBASSADOR.

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SUAVE SAID SHE HOPED WE WOULD BE RECEIVING

SOME "GOOD NEWS" SOON ALTHOUGH THERE WERE STILL SOME PROBLEMS OF WORDING IN PROPOSED CABINET DECISION RELATING TO DOC AUTHORITY OVER CRTS.

3. ON DECEMBER 3 TCO MET WITH STEIN, (ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL, SOCIAL POLICY AND PROGRAMS BRANCH, DOC) WHO CORROBORATED LIKELY FAVORABLE CHARACTER OF DECISION. STEIN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT LENGTH OF MORATORIUM NOT YET DECIDED AND SUGGESTED GOC MAY WISH TO KEEP OPTIONS OPEN FOR SOME KINDS OF SELECTIVE DELETION IN FUTURE AND THUS MAY BE LESS THAN CATEGORIC IN ITS RESPONSE.

4. RE SELECTIVE DELETIONS, STEIN MENTIONED THREE SITUATIONS (IN ADDITION TO CIGARETTE ADVERTISING RAISED DURING OCTOBER CONSULTATION) THAT ARE CAUSING OR MAY LATER CAUSE CONCERN:

(A) GOC OFFICIALS ARE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT EFFECTIVENESS OF C-58 IN STIMULATING REVENUES OF CANADIAN BROADCASTERS. DATA INDICATES THAT 80 PERCENT OF ADVERTISING REVENUES COME FROM MULTINATIONALS. FEAR IS THAT INCREASED CANADIAN RATES MAY CAUSE SUCH FIRMS TO RELY MORE AND MORE ON SPILLOVER EFFECTS OF PARENT COMPANIES' ADVERTISING ON U.S. BORDER STATIONS. BOC MAY WISH TO HOLD OPEN POSSIBILITY OF DELETING CERTAIN ADVERTISING OF MULTINATIONALS.

(B) DEPUTY MINISTER POLICY GROUP (DM-10) HAS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION A PROPOSAL TO BAN OR LIMIT ADVERTISING OF PRODUCTS WHERE PROMOTIONAL COSTS MAY WEIGH HEAVILY IN FINAL PRICE OF PRODUCT (E.G. SOAP, BEER, SOFT DRINKS, CEREALS). GOC MIGHT WISH TO DELETE COMMERCIALS FROM U.S. STATIONS IN ORDER TO PREVENT CIRCUMVENTION OF CANADIAN REGULATIONS. STEIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS SITUATION IS VERY HYPOTHETICAL AT PRESENT.

(C) GOC IS PRESSING CANADIAN BROADCASTERS TO ELIMINATE PROGRAMS CHARACTERIZED BY "EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE." INDUSTRY FEARS, HOWEVER, THAT AUDIENCES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL SHIFT EVEN MORE TO U.S. STATIONS AND ADVERTISERS WILL FOLLOW. REMEDY MIGHT BE TO DELETE ENTIRE PROGRAMS FROM U.S. CHANNELS.

5. STEIN ALSO REMARKED THAT HE HAD BEEN EXAMINING USG "PLUM BOOK" (CIRCULATED BY EXTAFF*) AND NOTED THAT SOME USG OFFICIALS WHO HAD BEEN CONCERNED WITH DELETION ISSUE WERE INCLUDED. TCO CAUTIONED

HIM NOT TO READ INTO THIS A POSSIBLE POLICY SHIFT.
HE NOTED THERE IS BIPARTISAN INTEREST IN ISSUE,
THERE WOULD BE INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY, AND U.S.
STATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS THEIR INTERESTS
ACTIVELY.

6. RECOMMENDATION: IF JAMIESON'S RESPONSE IS
EQUIVOCAL OR CONDITIONAL, EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT
SECRETARY TRY TO PIN HIM DOWN, NOTING THAT ANY
SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM MORATORIUM DURING MINIMUM
INITIAL PERIOD OF AT LEAS THREE YEARS WILL MEAN THAT
ISSUE WILL CONTINUE TO BE MAJOR IRRITANT IN BILATERAL
RELATIONS. IF AT END OF DISUCSSION, THERE ARE DOUBTS
ABOUT CANADIAN INTENTIONS, SECRETARY MAY WISH TO SUGGEST
ANOTHER MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AT AN EARLY DATE.
UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, A VERY EARLY MEETING IS
DESIRABLE, IN EMBASSY VIEW, TO MAKE SURE THAT DURING
1977 GOC DOES NOT TAKE ANY ACTIONS WHICH AROUSE
USG CONCERN AND WHICH GOC WOULD ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY
AS CONSISTENT WITH A JAMIESON/KISSINGER "UNDERSTANDING."
ENDERS

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